Life Is Not Easy

by Manu51

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Summary: Emma gets bad news about her grandmother and struggles to deal with it. Also, Wilfred is contemplating retirement and Zane and Rikki have a project. Set in season 3, with some differences from the show.

1. A Promotion And A Death

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A Promotion And A Death

It was another busy evening at the JuiceNet CafÃ©. The weather was beautiful in Gold Coast and the cafÃ© was crowded with people. Because school was out until late August, Wilfred had all his staff at his disposal. Emma was the employee with the most seniority, having been there for nearly two years.

Except for Wilfred, they were three employees on duty. There was Emma of course, Amber was there too, and a guy named Tom. Wilfred was pleased how his employees worked well together, but he was particularly impressed by Emma. Ever since she started working at the cafÃ©, she had been nothing less than stellar at her job. She always arrived early, worked hard, and been reliable. And furthermore, she was good to motivate her coworkers too. The truth is that she was giving everything she had at work to forget her grandmother's cancer, about which she found out a few months ago. Her grandma was really sick and the doctors were very pessimistic about her health.

''Emma, may I talk to you in the cool room?'' asked Wilfred.

''Yes, of course.''

Wilfred walked towards the cool room and opened the door. Emma followed her boss and closed the door behind her.

''Is something wrong, Wilfred?'' asked Emma.

''Not at all. In fact, I want to tell you I'm very proud of all the hard work you've been doing, Emma. You're an inspiration for your coworkers and it's good to know that I can rely on you anytime. But more importantly, you're a team player, and that's what we are here, a team.

''Well, I love my job here and I'm doing my best everyday. I'm not perfect, but I do the best I can,'' said Emma.

''Yeah. You've also been working here for nearly two years now and that means your're loyal. I decided to give you more responsibilities. What would you say if I give you a supervisor position? You would be the one in charge when I won't be here. Are you up for this challenge?''

''Of course I am! I've been waiting for this promotion for so long Wilfred!'' exclaimed Emma, really happy.

''Alright then. I will announce your promotion to the staff after closing time.''

''Ok. Thanks Wilfred! You really made my day!''

Emma exited the cool room and went back behind the counter. It was hard for her not to scream in joy. She had been working so hard to get this promotion and now her dream had come true! She felt like being on heaven.

Cleo, Rikki and Lewis were sitting at a table and noticed her happy mood.

''Hey Emma, what's with the big smile?'' asked Cleo, while Emma went to serve customers.

''I just got a good news. I can't tell you what exactly right now, but wait for me after closing time and I will tell you everything.''

''Okay.''

The cafÃ© closed that evening at 9 pm, like it did every evening. There was some clean up to do, so they finished around 9:30 pm. After they were done, Wilfred called a staff meeting.

''Okay everybody, I have two announcements to make, said Wilfred. First, I'm very proud to tell you that Emma has been promoted to a supervisor position.''

Amber and Tom clapped their hands to congratulate her. They knew it was logical for Emma to get promoted because of all the hard work she had been doing.

''I'm confident that I made the right decision in promoting Emma and I know she will be a good supervisor. Second, I wanted to announce that in a year or so I'll be retiring. I've been here for several years and I would like to spend time with my wife and kids. Currently I'm looking for investors to buy the cafÃ©, so I could prepare the transition. Well, that's all for now. Good evening everybody.''

They all went to change into their casual clothes and exited the CafÃ©. Cleo, Rikki and Lewis were waiting outside for Emma.

''So Emma, what's the big news?'' asked Lewis.

''I got promoted to a supervisor position!'' announced Emma.

''Hey, that's great! Congratulations Emma!'' said Cleo.

They all hugged her to show how they were happy for her.

''Oh and Wilfred said he will retire in a year,'' said Emma. ''He wants to spend more time with his family.''

''Well, I understand him. He's been managing the JuiceNet for a long time. The question is, what will happen to the cafÃ© after he retires.'' said Lewis.

''He told us that he's currently looking for investors that would be interested in buying the cafÃ©. That way, that would give him a chance to prepare the transition.'' said Emma.

''Interesting. I know somebody who may be interested in that opportunity. See you tomorrow guys.'' said Rikki.

''Bye.'' said Emma, Cleo and Lewis in unison.

''Hey Emma, I know you don't like to talk about that, but how is your grandmother?'' asked Cleo. ''Is she feeling better?''

''Unfortunately, no. She's still in hospital and the doctors are very pessimistic about her chances to get better.''

''It really sucks.''

''Yeah.''

They arrived at Emma's house and came in. Emma knew instantly something was wrong when she saw the look and her parents and brother's faces. They were all in the living room, looking very sad.

''Emma, I'm glad you're here. Come and sit down, I have some bad news,'' said her dad, Neil Gilbert. He saw Cleo and Lewis and encouraged them too to come in the living room.

''Dad, what's wrong? You're starting to freak me out'' said Emma, while she sat on a couch with Cleo and Lewis on each side of her.

''It's about grandma. She died from cancer today. Your aunt Lyn just called a few minutes ago to tell us.''

All the happiness Emma felt when Wilfred told her she was promoted immediately vanished and was replaced by sadness. Emma burst in tears and fell in Cleo's arms. _This can't be happening! Please tell me it's not true, that she will be okay! I don't want to lose her!_ But deep inside her, she knew it was just a matter of time before her

grandmother would pass away. Her health had been deteriorating constantly, and she was 85 years old.

As she was crying in Cleo's arms, Emma felt Lewis' hand on her shoulder. He knew how it felt to lose a loved one, his grandfather died in last November of lung cancer. He had been struggling to come to terms with that, so he understood Emma's reaction. After all, she had been very close to her grandmother ever since she was young. The blonde girl heard her mom and Elliot crying and her father was having a hard time to hold his tears.

Neil Gilbert walked towards his daughter and talked to her softly.

''At least, she won't suffer anymore.'' he said.

''It's so unfair! There was still a lot of things I would have tell her,'' said Emma.

''I know, honey. But there is nothing we can do.''

''Alright, I think we'll leave you in family,'' said Lewis.

''Thanks, we appreciate that.'' said Neil Gilbert.

Cleo and Lewis offered their sympathies to the Gilberts and hugged Emma again before leaving.

''Emma, feel free to call one of us anytime,'' said Cleo.

''Our cell phones will be on all night, so don't hesitate,'' added Lewis.

''Okay, thanks guys.''

They left the Gilberts household on that sad note.

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><p>Meanwhile, unaware about the death of Emma's grandmother, Rikki was at Zane's place.<p>

''So you're telling me that Wilfred is looking for investors to buy the JuiceNet?'' asked Zane.

''Yup. Sounds like a good opportunity for you, don't you think?''

''Wrong. It's a good opportunity for us, Rikki.''

''What do you mean?''

''I mean that I want you to be my business partner and buy the JuiceNet with me.'' said Zane.

''But Zane, I have no money to invest in the JuiceNet! My dad is really struggling with money, remember?''

''Don't worry about money, Rikki! We'll take my money to buy the

JuiceNet! Tomorrow we'll talk to Wilfred and make him a purchase offer for the cafÃ©. If he accepts, we could learn the business with him until his retirement, and after that, we would be the new owners.''

''Ok, I'm in.''

''Good.'' said Zane with a smile.

2. Rikki And Zane Find Out

Rikki And Zane Find Out

Rikki and Zane were still talking about their project when Rikki's phone rang. She pulled it out of her shorts pocket and looked at the caller ID which read _Cleo._

''Hey Cleo, what's up?''

''Rikki, I've got some bad news to tell you,'' said Cleo. ''It's about Emma.''

''Is she ok?'' asked Rikki, concerned for her friend.

''No, she's not. Her grandmother died of cancer today at the hospital. Me and Lewis were with her at her house when her dad told her.''

''Oh my god, poor Emma! She must be devastated right now.''

''Yeah, she is. We left Emma with her family, but I could tell I'm feeling so sorry for her.''

''I understand. Thank you for letting me know about that, Cleo. I'll go see Emma tomorrow with Zane.''

''Ok bye.''

Rikki hung up her phone and turned to face Zane. She was in complete shock.

''What's wrong Rikki? You're pale like if you would have seen a ghost.'' said Zane.

''Emma's grandmother died of cancer today,'' answered Rikki weakly.

''Fuck, that really sucks! Emma was so close to her grandmother, she must be devastated right now.''

''Yeah. Cleo told me she and Lewis were there when Emma found out.''

''You know what Rikki. We'll go visit Emma tomorrow. She needs our support, we are her friends.''

''You're right.'' said Rikki.

* * *

><p>The atmosphere was heavy in the Gilberts household. After all, Neil lost his mom, Lisa her mother-in-law and Emma and Elliot a beloved grandmother. Elliot was crying in his sister's arms and Neil Gilbert was comforting his wife.<p>

''Dad, when is the funeral going to be?'' asked Emma.

''I don't know yet. I'll go with your aunts and uncles at the funeral home tomorrow to organize everything. If I remember well, your grandmother wanted to be exposed during two days and to be buried after.''

They went to bed late that night, but nobody was able to sleep. Emma cried her eyes out almost all night before she finally fell asleep. She woke up at 8 am while she heard her dad talking on the phone.

''Hello Harrison, it's Neil. Listen, I'm sorry, but I won't be able to come to work today. I just learned last night that my mother died of cancer. I would appreciate to take some time off from work for a while, just to clear my head. Thank you for understanding.''

Emma got out of her bed and went downstairs. Her dad was sitting at the kitchen table, eating his cereals.

''Hello Emma. Did you manage to sleep?'' asked Neil.

''Very little. I cried almost all night before falling asleep around 5:30 maybe.''

''Yeah, I didn't sleep well too. I just called Harrison a few minutes ago to tell him the news.''

''I think I'll tell Wilfred today. I feel pretty bad, because he just gave me a promotion last night. He made me his new supervisor at the JuiceNet.''

''Emma, that's great! I'm proud of you!'' he said, hugging his daughter.

''I don't really care about work right now, losing grandma really hurts, dad.''

''I know, Emma. Believe me, I know how you feel. I lost my mother, one of the most important people in my life. It won't be the same without her around.''

''True. We would always feel her absence on holidays.''

''I got to go, Emma. I'll meet your aunts and uncles at the funeral home. I'll see you later honey.''

''Bye, dad.''

Emma went upstairs to take a bath. While she was in the bath, she thought about was she would do that day. She decided that she would eat breakfast after her bath and go to the JuiceNet later, to inform Wilfred about her grandmother's death.

After she was done taking her bath, Emma dried herself and waited for her mermaid tail to disappear before putting on her wardrobe. Then, she walked to her room and dressed in simple clothes. She chose to wear jean shorts and a t-shirt.

Emma went downstairs to eat her breakfast. She poured some cereals in a bowl and sat at the table. After her breakfast, she put her bowl in the dishwasher. She took her keys and her phone and left the house to go to the JuiceNet after she locked the door.

When she came in the JuiceNet, she went straight to the counter where Wilfred was.

''Wilfred, may I talk to you privately?'' asked Emma.

''Sure, Emma. Come with me in the cool room.''

Emma followed Wilfred and closed the cool room door behind her.

''Is something wrong, Emma? You look really tired.'' said Wilfred.

''I didn't sleep very well last night. My grandmother died yesterday. My dad told me last night after I got home after work.'' answered Emma.

''I'm sorry, Emma. If you need some time off from work, there will be no problem.''

''Yes, I could use some time off.''

''No problem. Just call me when you will be ready to come back to work. There won't be anybody replacing you in your supervisor position, we'll wait for you to come back. Take the time you need, Emma. Let me know when the funeral will take place.''

''Alright, thanks Wilfred.''

Emma went back to her house, her spirit in the fog.

* * *

><p>Rikki was walking the path leading to Zane's doorstep. She wanted to go see Emma with Zane to give her sympathies about her grandmother's death. Rikki rang the doorbell and waited. A few minutes later, Zane opened the door.<p>

''Hey Rikki! It's good to see you!''

''I was wondering if you'd like to come with me to Emma's house.'' said Rikki.

''Yes of course.''

Zane took his keys with him and they were on their way.

Meanwhile, Emma was sitting on the couch, feeling like her world was collapsing. She didn't know if she would be able to cope and come to terms with her grandmother's death. She felt lost without her.

Lisa Gilbert and Elliot were in the kitchen eating breakfast. Like Emma, they didn't sleep well. Suddenly, the doorbell rang.

''I'll get it.'' said Elliot.

He walked to the door and opened it. There was Rikki and Zane standing on the porch.

''Hi Rikki, Hi Zane,'' said Elliot.

''Hello Elliot. May we come in?'' asked Rikki.

''Sure.''

Elliot let them in and closed the door behind them.

''Cleo told me about your grandmother. Please accept our sympathies.'' said Rikki.

''Thanks, I appreciate it.''

They went to the kitchen to offer Lisa their sympathies and went to see Emma after that.

''Em, I'm really sorry about your grandmother, said Rikki, while her and Zane sat on the couch. But more importantly, I'm sorry we weren't here with you when you learned it last night.

''It's not your fault. You couldn't know, Rikki. It's just, I don't know how I'll deal with this.'' said Emma.

She buried her face in her hands and started to cry. Rikki took her in her arms, while Zane stroke Emma's shoulder in a comforting way.

''We'll be there to support you through this, Emma. You can count on us,'' said Zane.

''Thanks, Zane. I really appreciate it.'' said Emma.

''Anytime.''

* * *

><p>Cleo was waiting for Lewis to arrive. She wanted to see Emma, she was really worried about her friend. The doorbell rang at this instant and Cleo went to open the door.<p>

''Hi Cleo, said Lewis.

''Hi Lewis.''

She kissed him and they left Cleo's house, heading to the Gilberts household.

''I wonder if Rikki and Zane went to see Emma,'' said Cleo, as she was walking hand in hand with Lewis.

''Maybe not, it's only 9:15 am, said Lewis. It's still early.''

They arrived at Emma's house and Cleo rang the doorbell. A few minutes later, Lisa Gilbert opened the door.

''Hello you two! Please come in, Emma is in the living room.''

Cleo and Lewis came in the house and Lisa closed the door behind the two teenagers. She was glad that Emma could count on the support of such good friends.

The young couple went to the living room, where Zane and Rikki greeted them. Emma stood from the couch and hugged Cleo and Lewis, her eyes still red from crying.

''Thank you everybody for being here, I really appreciate your support,'' said Emma, while Lewis and Cleo sat on the couch.

''Emma, we're here for you. All of us will support you through this.'' said Lewis.

Around 10:30 am, Neil Gilbert came back from the funeral home. Everything was now organized for his mother's funeral.

''Mr Gilbert, please accept our deepest sympathies,'' said Rikki and Zane.

''Thanks. I really appreciate it, you know,'' said Neil.

''When will the funeral take place?'' asked Lisa Gilbert.

''Well, she will be exposed next Monday and Tuesday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm at the funeral home, and the funeral itself will be on Thursday afternoon at 1:00 pm. Everything is organized,'' answered Neil Gilbert.

''We would all be there and our parents too,'' said Zane.

''Wilfred told me he would be there for the funeral too,'' said Emma.

''Everybody who would like to come is welcome to do so, it'll be a pleasure for us to see people there to support us,'' said Neil Gilbert.

Cleo, Lewis, Rikki and Zane all nodded, understanding the situation. Emma would need their support during the period she would mourn her grandmother's death, and the four teens were ready to do it.

End
file.